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then if the Curator fails for a moment in his high duty of discrimination and takes refuge in the period where he knows he can hardly fail?

But this is not an apology for such a weak-kneed curator. Unless he is pledged to the archaeological point of view or to the preservation of antiquities he must be alert and sensitive to the most modern art. Behind all his necessary conservatism and carefully cherished and cultivated distrust he should at heart remain a progressive, hospitable to every new impulse that rings true, and hoping for some new master, always believing that his struggle for high standard must inevitably succeed.

L. W.

School Notes

THE proposed development of the special kinds of pottery promoted by the School is now made possible of accomplishment through the will of Miss Margaret Baugh, who, as a memorial to Doctor Edwin Atlee Barber, has bequeathed the sum of fifty thousand dollars for this purpose, as expressed in the terms of the will. More than thirty-five years ago, the School began the work in salt-glazed stone-ware, and the simple red and yellow slipped pottery, with sgraffito decorations, the impetus to this having been given by a few examples in the museum at Memorial Hall. Since that time the collection there has been greatly augmented, chiefly by purchase of "Pennsylvania Dutch" ware, through the John T. Morris fund.

The establishment of the prize scholarship in 1914 enabled the most gifted student of this subject, Leon W. Corson, to go abroad and study the best originals in Italy, where much of this work has been done, the admirable results of which experience he fully demonstrated upon his return, and the School is in possession of excellent examples of the successful carrying out of these artistically conceived designs. The unfortunate illness and death of the gifted young man who executed the work, prevented its further development, but it may be possible to discover a follower of this pioneer to work under these better circumstances.

It has proved a wise course to devote the efforts of the pupils of pottery to the study of a few good means of expression, and the stone and sgraffito ware, with experiments in a Persian type of lustre, yield all that is necessary to demonstrate the art for practical purposes. At least one additional kiln would be necessary to develop these lines of work and the insurance of the maintenance of a few workers to devote their entire time to the subject.

The kind of ware which is covered by this title is fabricated from the clay most commonly found throughout this State, but of course is generally to be found in all clay countries. Its first production here was for utilitarian purposes and not for artistic effects.

The contrast between the red and yellow ware of the early settlers

of Pennsylvania and that of the people of the Italian peninsula, could hardly be greater and maintain the same substance and colors. The German and Dutch elements in the first diametrically opposed to the Latin qualities of the second, and their passage through the medium of American environment modified them practically not at all. The production of this particular kind of pottery was at too early a date to be affected by conditions in its new field, for the simple reason that there were no conditions except the necessity of supplying the daily requirements of a colony transplanted, with all its ideas fixed and all its accessories brought from older countries into a virgin region which furnished nothing but the clays from which the forms were made. It is only natural that the desires of the potter, and his customers, should be to produce reminders of the lands they had left, rather than of the new soil—where their surroundings were more or less wild and uncivilized. The pie plate, the wedding platter and the cider jug were the chief products in Pennsylvania, and these of ample proportion suited to the heavy character of the inhabitants. The milk pitcher was also a necessity, but decoration was limited to scrolls, rude attempts to depict floral forms, and, rarely, animals and human figures, the latter sometime with names and dates woven about them. These were usually the presentation pieces for ceremonial occasions.

The present revival of sgraffito (literally "scratched") pottery is to utilize the native common clays and give decorative value and beauty to everyday utensils. It is not an attempt to produce ornaments, but ornamented necessities. It is not an attempt to be Italian, but to be artistic, and at the same time to be practical. It combines duty and pleasure, bodily labor and mental enjoyment, for it is one of the freest means of expression we have in concrete material.

Much of the charm (and all the cheapness of price) comes from the extreme ease with which it can be wrought upon. Readiness of idea and facility in rendering it is essential both to the character and the worth of the product.

The process is simplicity itself. The pot or plate is made of (usually) red clay, and when in a certain condition of surface, is "slipped" (or dipped) with a yellowish or whitish earth, which also at a certain stage of its drying upon the surface received the tracings of the design, and the parts requiring the ground color to show are scratched away, and, after firing, the glaze further differentiates the colors. In some cases touches of different kinds of glazes produce a variety of effects not always so much to be desired as the single hue. The line work done upon the "slip," showing the under clay through, is effective, only in the one glaze, as its finest qualities, like an etching, are best revealed by the less complicated process.

After the piece of ware has been made, whether coiled, turned, or molded, and the degree of firmness attained (it ought to be fairly yielding to the touch) it should be "slipped" with the coating clay, which is prepared of a cream-like consistency, either by quickly dipping it into a vat of the "slip," or (less desirable) floating a layer of it

over the surface. The thickness of this varies, but it is never well to repeat the process of "slipping" until the layer is much beyond a sixteenth of an inch thick, as it is very difficult to find two clays so adjusted to each other than their shrinkage under heat will be equal, and, of course, every irregularity will produce cracks and lead to the scaling off of the applied material. When the "slip" has dried to feel firm to the handling, the design should be traced upon it with a hard pencil-point, or a not too sharp tracing needle and the action should be one of pressure rather than of cutting. If the subject is a line effect the forms should be gone over with incisions (still "pressure") reaching the under layer, and the bone tool is best for this also. The ploughing of the upper coating turns a sort of burr, which is often very effective and more interesting than the smooth edge. However, this is more a matter of subject than of object; but extremely conventional themes, such as heraldic devices, are usually the better for the thicker treatment, in which the lighter color is applied above the darker. It is an axiom with certain art teachers that "light against dark is the decorative propriety, and dark against light the pictorial," the subject is left and the background scraped away to the red underneath. This is done by means of flat or slightly curved wooden tools. Sometimes the effect is improved by roughening the dark parts, but if this is overdone it is apt to produce the impression of the lighter design being detached from it.

Leon W. Corson, who began its revival, studied the examples in various parts of Europe—the Holland type, the German, and particularly, the Italian—and established a basis on which he produced designs suitable for the American market. There is no other attempt to revive this except a rather spasmodic one at Bassano, north of Venice, where, in a small way, and not with the best judgment, an effort has been made to reproduce the designs originating here several centuries ago. The chief mistake is in aiming to give expression to heads of the Madonna and other mediaeval types rendered full-face—a fruitless task and an ugly one. The dashes of vari-colored glazes, including a mulberry hue, upon the usual red and yellow grounds, do not improve them. It would have been better to have studied the delightful fragments preserved in the museums of Florence, and in the workshops of the chief potters of the city such as Cantagalli and Ginori. Many of these have been gathered from the debris in old wells to which the pitcher or bowl has "gone too often" finally to be lost in its depths. No effort has been made to reproduce these whole, they remain riveted to their "mounts" and accumulate dust. Until Mr. Corson began his studies of them they had been undisturbed for many years.

Legitimate art work is any improvement of the form, color or decoration of objects, so that they are more desirable "to have and to hold" and consequently more valuable as commodities for trade. The commercial value of art has been best understood by the French, who have made a study of the means of bettering their goods so that

they command the market, and in our everyday needs the place of good art is quite as essential as good workmanship. The question should be not only how strong is this thing, but how beautiful, and it matters little whether it is in the parlor or in the pantry.

What can be said of the plates decorated in sgraffito is equally true of the tiles; they are of a richness, not at all in the style of painted ornament, but in the light-touched brilliancy which relief of a sharp kind always gives. In the best work there is always a little "burr" (a rough, upturned edge left by the quick plowing of the surface by the instrument) which gives little accidental points for catching the light, and animates the design with the vivacity of touch which a worker with personality gives in his handling. Those practitioners who are able to indicate their ideas, and then firmly and surely, and above all freely, manipulate the material, are the only ones qualified to get genuine and effective results. Indeed, the work is akin to that done in carved plaster by the Arabs, requiring a readiness and precision which the setting of the line, or the clay as the case may be—made imperative if it is to be timely. Fresco, the true fresco, painted directly upon the wet wall, demanded the same; and our smaller and milder water color on paper, is likewise imperative in its claims for immediate attention and the "direct method." The flat face of the plaque or tile admits of more complexity of design than the turning surface of the vase or cup, and fancy may run riot here, where the restraint of only partial sight does not control. It is no minor problem so to present a composition on a spherical surface that from any point of view it will appear legible and at the same time pleasing. Judgment is based upon the adaptability to the form, and in the groups of jars and bowls shown no pattern will be found too large nor too small to meet this canon of criticism. The secret, then, is to preserve the pattern in its wholeness so the eye can always take in the full idea and, if repeated, enough of this to insure its thorough understanding.

The very mediaeval jar with heraldic features and a lid is almost Romanesque in its robustness of shape and the strength with which the lines are scored through the overlay to the dark body underneath. The dolphins are almost modeled. In the simpler form, without handles, actual relief has been given to the chief band, and almost a forged effect produced by the handling, but these are thumb and finger marks, not the impressions of fire and hammer.

A distinctive effect is produced by a glazed decoration upon a dull or "biscuit" body, as shown in the Roman-like vase with garlands and ox-skulls (bucranes) where the pattern in rich, glistening, cornelian red, against the creamy, porous background, is extremely striking but in no way bizarre. Many of the early Italian examples have partially glazed surfaces, usually a strip or a division made by deep grooves to keep the glaze from overflowing, or some cavity into

which it is allowed to settle, but the picking out of the pattern in this manner is not common.

The Greeks had a kind of sgraffito in distinction from their painted vases, and the examples shown of the free resurrection of this style will have a stronger interest than merely that of contrasting with the more florid and exuberant Italian. It is often overlooked that the Greeks used relief in terra cotta vessels almost if not quite as much as did the Etruscans, and that much color was employed upon them. Indeed, it was through the burnt clay figurines found at Tanagra that the polychromatic painting of the sculpture and architectural members came to be understood. The forms are naturally heavier than those turned for the painted decoration; the process of ornamenting them would suggest they require this difference, and there is no incentive to score into a thin and fragile shape which does not invite depressions. Therefore a degree of "fatness" obtains—far other than that presented by the Pennsylvania German types—but an attractive plumpness, a roundness of lips and sides. The handles consistently exhibit a greater robustness also. In short, it maintains its plebeian origin refined by the restrained character of the decoration. Just as in the Greek painting the touch of the brush was the sign of the skill of the artist, so in the tooled designs the directness tells the story in the same way. Since one is working in a plastic and impressionable medium, it follows that the ideas and manipulation should be as sensitive and manageable.